

Land at Stanford Road, Shefford
Development Brief
(Draft - February 2012)

Central Bedfordshire Council



1. Introduction

Context

- 1.1 This Development Brief has been prepared to guide the development of the land off Stanford Road, Shefford.
- 1.2 The land at Stanford Road is allocated for residential development together with public open space and a nature reserve by Policy HA10 of the Site Allocations for Central Bedfordshire (North Area) Development Plan Document April 2011 (the 'Site Allocations DPD').
- 1.3 The Development Brief aims to ensure that quality design is achieved throughout the development, providing an attractive environment that complements the existing character of Shefford.

Purpose

- 1.4 The purpose of this Development Brief is to:
- Establish an urban design framework for the site, based on site constraints and opportunities and planning policy requirements;
 - Provide an indication of the likely planning obligations required to support development on the site;
 - Confirm the nature of the technical work required to support any planning application for the development of the site;
 - Provide a mechanism through which members of the public can have greater involvement in the development of proposals for the site; and
 - Provide certainty for prospective developers and members of the public as to the future development of the site.

Status

- 1.5 It is intended that Central Bedfordshire Council (the Council) will endorse the Development Brief as technical guidance. The approved Brief will be a material consideration in guiding and informing development management decisions in respect of any future planning application for the site. (TO BE UPDATED AT POINT OF ADOPTION.)

~~Email: ldf@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk~~

Consultation

1.6 The Council adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in February 2006. The SCI sets out how the Council will engage with the community as part of the planning process.

1.7 Although the SCI does not set out specific proposals for consultation on technical guidance, ~~it is intended that consultation on this brief should be carried out~~ *has been prepared* in accordance with the broad principles established in the SCI. *The Development Brief was subject to two stages of public consultation and the results of these are summarised in an accompanying consultation report.*

~~1.8 This draft Brief will be made available for a four week consultation period. During this period members of the public, groups and organisations can comment on the draft proposals.~~

~~1.9 All comments should be made in writing by 5pm on 10th of February 2012, posted or emailed to:~~

~~For the attention of: Carry Murphy, Principal Planning Officer~~

~~Local Planning and Housing Team~~

~~Development Planning and Housing Strategy~~

~~Central Bedfordshire Council~~

~~Technology House,~~

~~Amphill Road~~

~~Bedford MK42 9BD~~

~~1.10 Following this consultation period, the Brief will be updated, taking account of any relevant suggestions or comments received. The revised Brief will then be placed before the Executive Committee of the Council for endorsement as technical guidance.~~

2. Planning Policy

2.1 Policy HA10 of the Site Allocations DPD states:

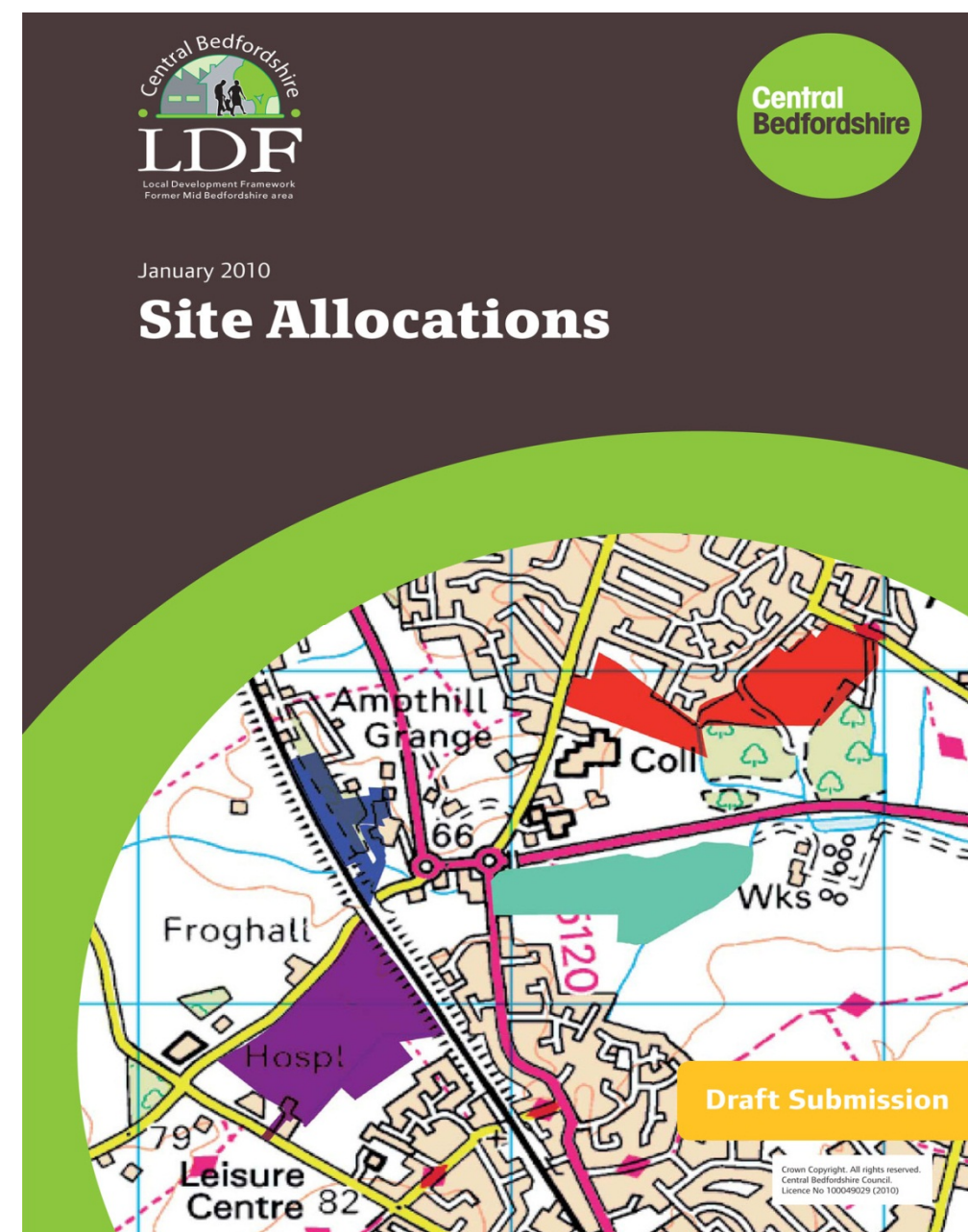
“Land at Stanford Road, Shefford, as identified on the Proposals Map, is allocated for Residential development providing approximately 100 dwellings, nature reserve and an extension to the Millennium Green.

In addition to general policy requirements in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD and appropriate contributions to infrastructure provision in the Planning Obligations SPD, development on this site will be subject to the following:

- ***The production of a Development Brief to guide development;***
- ***Preservation and enhancement of the River Ivel and associated meadows, including the River Flit County Wildlife Site;***
- ***Provision of a new roundabout on Stanford Road to provide safe and convenient access to the development;***
- ***Provision of sufficient capacity within the public foul sewerage system to meet the needs of the development;***
- ***Provision of a buffer zone and a mechanism for the long term management of the River Flit County Wildlife Site; and***
- ***Provision of an appropriate landscaping scheme in order to help assimilate the development into the surrounding countryside in accordance with the landscape character.”***

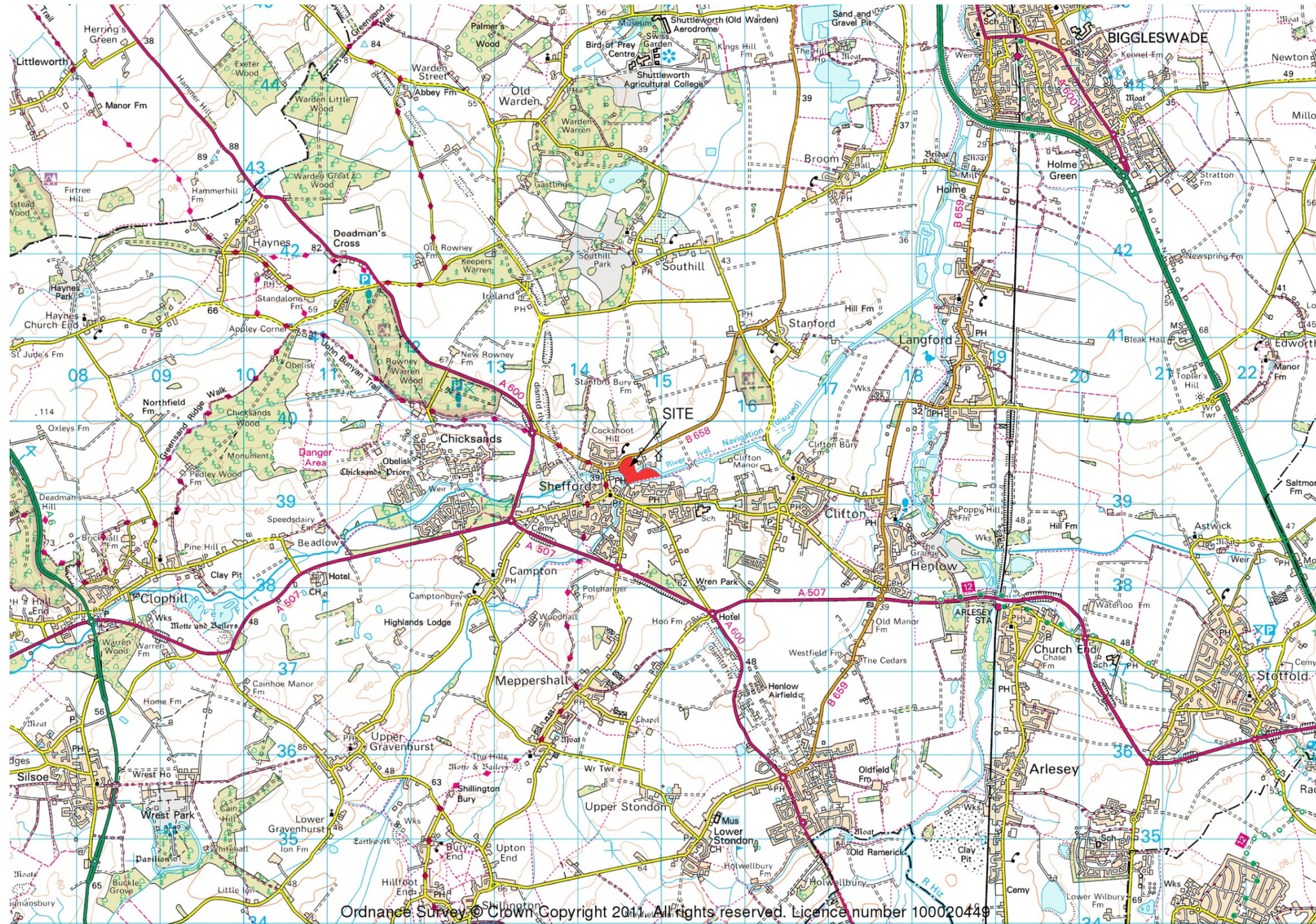
2.2 Relevant policies from the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD are referred to as required throughout this Brief. The full text of the policies can be viewed on the Council's website (<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>).

2.3 Developers are also advised to have regard to the Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Developers SPD and its companion Design Supplements in preparing proposals for the site



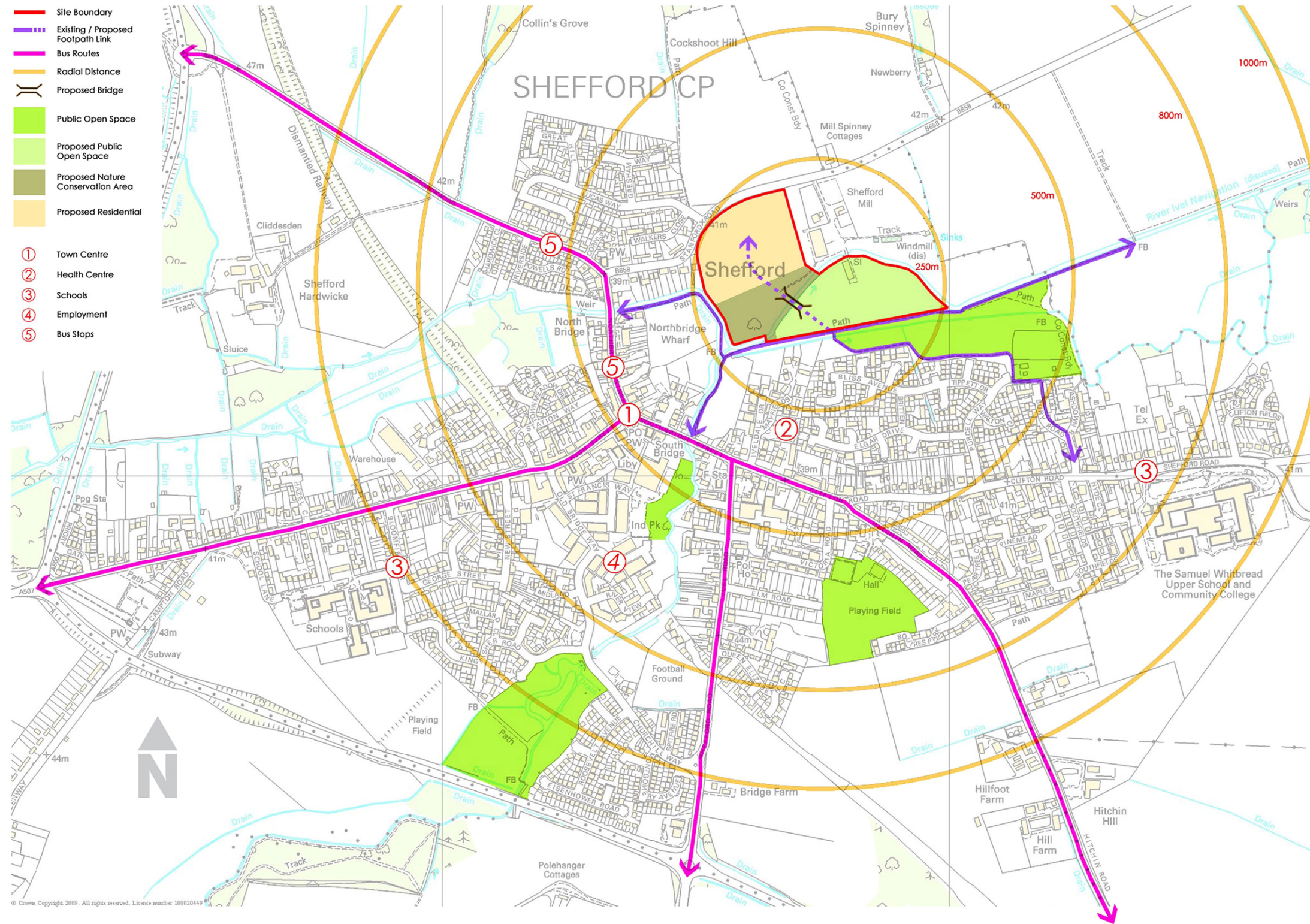
3. Site Context

3.1 Shefford is a small historic market town situated at the confluence of the Rivers Hit and Flit. Detail on the historical development of the town can be found on the Town Council’s website (<http://www.sheffordtown.co.uk>).



Stanford Road, Shefford – Location Plan – Not to scale

3.2 The Stanford Road site is located northwest of the town centre, and is shown in context on the plan below.



(NOTE PLAN TO BE AMENDED – STATUS OF FOOTPATHS TO BE DETERMINED) Stanford Road, Sheffield – Context Plan – Not to scale

3.3 It is 8.02 hectares in area, in single ownership and comprises three distinct areas, shown on the photographic record overleaf:

- The developable area to the north of the River Flit beyond its floodplain, within the curve of Stanford Road, comprising neglected arable land;
- The County Wildlife Site, comprising of an area of reedbeds and developing carr¹ woodland on the north bank of the River Flit (this is part of the wider River Flit County Wildlife Site); and
- The island meadow, to the south of the River Flit adjacent to the Millennium Green.

3.4 Residential development along Stanford Road adjoins the developable area to the west, whilst to the east there are light industrial and residential uses.

¹Woodland in a wet or boggy area, usually containing alder or willow. Source: *The Woodland Trust* <http://www.british-trees.com/glossary/index>



≡ Aerial photograph



≡ River level



≡ Stanford Road frontage



≡ County Wildlife Site



≡ Millennium Green

Stanford Road, Shefford – Photographic Record

4. Constraints and Opportunities

4.1 The constraints and opportunities associated with the Stanford Road site are shown on the plans below and overleaf. Prospective developers will need to demonstrate how these have been addressed as part of their proposals.



(PLAN AMENDED TO REMOVE REFERENCE TO OTTER HOLTS) Stanford Road, Sheffield – Constraints Plan – Not to scale



(NOTE AMENDED TO REMOVE REFERENCE TO OTTER HOLT) Stanford Road, Sheffield – Opportunities Plan – Not to scale

5. Design Principles

5.1 Central Bedfordshire Council's commitment to achieving high quality design is clearly set out in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD² and the Design Guide for Central Bedfordshire. Prospective developers should ensure they are familiar with these documents and that their proposals for the development of the Stanford Road site adhere to the principles contained therein. Of particular importance is the need to ensure the development successfully incorporates local vernacular architecture and is recognisably part of Shefford. Ill considered pastiche design will not be acceptable.

Use and amount

5.2 Policy HA10 of the Site Allocations DPD clearly establishes the parameters for the Stanford Road site in respect of use and amount.

Housing mix

5.3 In accordance with Policy DM10 *Housing Mix*, prospective developers will be expected to provide a mix of both market and affordable dwellings on the site, a proportion of which will be required to meet Lifetime Homes standards.

5.4 Prospective developers are expected to provide justification for the mix of market dwellings proposed, and to seek the advice of the Council's affordable housing team in determining an appropriate mix of affordable housing that best meets local needs.

Affordable housing

5.5 Policy CS7 *Affordable Housing* requires that, subject to viability, 35% of the total dwellings provided on the site are to be affordable. The affordable housing proposed should fall within the definitions contained within Planning Policy Statement 3, and the exact tenure mix will be agreed with the Council's Housing Strategy team.

5.6 The affordable housing should be distributed in clusters across the development site and should be indistinguishable in appearance from the market housing.

Layout

5.7 The layout of the scheme should respond to the site constraints and opportunities together with the urban design principles set out in the Design Guide. It should be based on the perimeter block approach, providing strong frontages throughout, corner turning buildings as required and focal points at key locations.

5.8 From a design perspective, the following areas of the site are key to the success of any scheme:

- The site entrance from Stanford Road;
- The Stanford Road frontage;
- In and around a central feature square;
- Overlooking the County Wildlife Site; and
- Around the pedestrian link over the River Flit

² Core Strategy Policy CS14 *High Quality Development* and Development Management Policy DM3 *High Quality Development*



(NOTE PLAN AMENDED – URBAN DESIGN COMMENTS, FOOTPATH NETWORK IN MEADOW, LINK TO EAST, ‘VILLAGE GREEN’ REFERENCE) Stanford Road, Shefford – Draft Concept Plan – Not to scale

Scale & massing

- 5.9 Development is to be no greater than two storeys in height.

Architectural detailing

- 5.10 As set out above, the Council expect the design of the proposed dwellings to reflect the best features of local vernacular architecture. Prospective developers will need to undertake a contextual analysis to inform the design process, which should form part of a Design and Access Statement accompanying any planning application. Subtle distinctions in architectural detailing (and landscaping treatment) between groups of buildings within the site will also assist legibility.

Sustainability

- 5.11 In accordance with Policy DM1, prospective developers will need to demonstrate how 10% of the predicated energy requirements of the development will be generated either on or near the site by renewable or low carbon energy generation technologies.
- 5.12 Policy DM2 requires all dwellings on the site to be built to meet the mandatory standards at the level within Code for Sustainable Homes applicable at the time a planning application is submitted. The policy also requires the incorporation of measures to reduce white water consumption in all major developments. As such, prospective developers will need to demonstrate how these requirements will be met.

Access, street hierarchy and connectivity

- 5.13 Policy HA10 requires the provision of a new conventional, non traversable roundabout is proposed on Stanford Road to serve the new development. The

optimum location of this roundabout is at the existing junction of Stanford Road with Lucas Way, and this will help to calm traffic arriving in Shefford from the east. An opportunity also exists for the creation of a gateway feature along Stanford Road to the east of the site access to further assist with traffic calming, and this opportunity should be explored by prospective developers.

- 5.14 Within the site, a clear hierarchy of streets should be created, all of which should be pedestrian and cyclist friendly, in accordance with the principles contained in Manual for Streets 2. In particular, the scheme should exhibit 'Shared Space' characteristics³. The design of the scheme should result in low vehicle speeds, for example via the use of restricted forward visibility, contrasting surface treatments and horizontal build outs.
- 5.15 Prospective developers are required to maximise access to Shefford and the wider area by sustainable modes. In particular, links to existing footpaths on Shefford Road and to the south of the River Flit should be created, the latter by way of a new footbridge over the river. New paths created in the meadow area should be dedicated as public rights of way. Improvements to existing footpaths may also be required to promote walking as a desirable transport mode all year round.

Parking

- 5.16 In accordance with Policy CS4 and the Council's Design Guide, adequate space for the parking of vehicles for each dwelling will need to be made, in order to avoid excessive on street parking.

³ Shared Space is defined in Manual for Streets 2 as 'a street or place accessible to both pedestrians and vehicles that is designed to enable pedestrians to move more freely by reducing traffic management features that tend to encourage users of vehicles to assume priority'.

5.17 A variety of parking solutions should be provided within the site with the aim of removing the on plot parked vehicle from the street scene as far as is possible. Parking solutions should, as far as is practicable, ensure that parking spaces are conveniently related to the plot that they serve.

Green Infrastructure

5.18 Given the extent of Green Infrastructure to be delivered as part of the proposed development, a high quality landscaping scheme is crucial to its overall success. The scheme should, as shown on the landscape concept plan overleaf:

- Retain and enhance existing landscape features where possible;
- Provide a variety of linked accessible and inaccessible landscape types which meet the needs of residents and wildlife;
- Use native planting species consistent with those found in the Upper Flit Clay Valley landscape character area;
- Ensure that green infrastructure is overlooked by dwellings as far as is possible;
- Incorporate suitable street trees throughout the development to break up the built form;
- ~~Provide a green link through the development area linking Stanford Road with the proposed open space;~~
- Provide native buffer planting along the Stanford Road frontage (ensuring that built development is able to provide surveillance over Stanford Road);
- Provide a high quality, locally equipped area for play (*LEAP*);
- Introduce an area of structural landscaping on the eastern boundary of the site to soften the rural to urban transition (*opportunities for appropriate off site structural landscaping as an alternative should also be explored*); and

- Include an appropriate 'light touch' management regime to ensure the scheme has long term benefits whilst avoiding costly regular intervention.

5.19 Policies DM14, DM15, DM16 and DM17 together with the Mid Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment provide further guidance on green infrastructure matters.



DRAWING AMENDED TO CLARIFY STRUCTURAL LANDSCAPING POSITION Stanford Road, Shefford – Draft Concept Landscape Plan – Not to scale

Drainage

5.20 As set out in Policy DM2, the Council expects the provision of a Sustainable Urban Drainage system as part of any development scheme, and prospective developers will need to carry out appropriate investigations in order to determine the most suitable method of sustainable surface water disposal. Details of the proposed Sustainable Urban Drainage system will need to be provided as part of any planning application package.

5.21 In light of the requirements of Policy HA10 and the capacity constraints of the local sewerage network, prospective developers will also need to provide details of the proposed foul water disposal strategy.

Services

5.22 The scheme should include provision for the necessary on-site infrastructure to ensure future connectivity to superfast broadband internet services.

6. Application Requirements

6.1 Given the extent of guidance available, brought together in this Brief, the Council expect prospective developers to make a full application for planning permission for the development of the Stanford Road site.

6.2 An Environmental Impact Assessment screening opinion has been adopted by the Council confirming that the likely environmental effects of the proposed development would not warrant the preparation of an Environmental Statement to accompany any planning application. However, due to the issues highlighted in this Brief, in addition to statutory national requirements, the technical and design work required to support any future planning application are as follows⁴:

- Landscape Design and Management Strategy;
- Tree Assessment (including Tree Protection Plan);
- Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan;
- Sustainability Statement;
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy;
- Habitat and Protected Species Survey;
- County Wildlife Site Enhancement and Management Plan;
- Heritage Asset Assessment; and
- Draft Section 106 heads of terms.

7. Planning Obligations

7.1 In order to mitigate the impact of the development on local community facilities and services, as well as to secure the implementation of the community benefits proposed as part of the development, prospective developers will be required to enter into a planning obligation.

7.2 As such, prospective developers are advised to enter into early discussions with the Council in order to determine appropriate draft heads of terms, although it is acknowledged that the precise terms of any planning obligation will not be agreed until a resolution to approve planning permission has been made.

7.3 The Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2009) will provide a starting point for negotiations, although the Council acknowledges that any obligation sought will need to comply with the statutory tests laid out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.

⁴ The Council reserves the right to amend this list in light of any relevant amendment to national or local planning policy.